Policy

UW-River Falls is committed to providing a safe environment in which to learn, teach, perform research, work, study, and visit. Because the Coronavirus (COVID-19) can spread quickly and cause widespread illness, the University will implement measures it deems necessary in order to protect faculty, staff, students, contractors, volunteers, and visitors from potential exposure to this disease.

Wisconsin State Statutes § 36.09 and § 36.11 provide authority to the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents to protect the health and safety of those on University of Wisconsin System campuses. This authority has been delegated in part to the Chancellors of each UW campus. Regent Policy Document 23.2 provides authority to the Chancellor to develop public health policies and require those on campus to comply with those policies.

While as of February 2021, the State of Wisconsin is seeing a reduction in the number of new COVID-19 cases, the continued use of face coverings is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), local health departments and healthcare professionals as an easy way to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. Many medical professionals and public health experts believe that wearing face coverings is the simplest way to slow and prevent the spread of COVID-19 virus without requiring people stay in their homes.

As of the date of this policy, there is a state-wide face coverings mandate that has been issued by Governor Evers. This policy is intended to supplement that state-wide order for purposes of continuing to place health and safety at the forefront of campus operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Risk reduction strategies will continue to be important as our state and county strive to vaccinate people as quickly as possible and as the threat of widespread virus variants looms.

Accordingly, effective the date of this policy and continuing until otherwise announced by the University, the following requirements are in place for all university students, employees and visitors to campus:

1. Face coverings are required.
   a. Every individual who enters campus lands shall wear a face covering in all indoor public spaces except students in their assigned residence hall rooms and employees when alone in a private, unshared office or lab.
   b. Face coverings are not required when eating or drinking, but individuals are expected to utilize good judgment and take additional safeguards, such as not eating in classes, promptly replacing face coverings when finished, and using physical distancing.
   c. Similarly, face coverings are not required in the residence halls when it is not conducive to performing a task (i.e. brushing teeth, showering, etc.).
   d. Face coverings are required outside when not able to physically distance or when traveling in a group of two or more individuals.
e. Face coverings are required when two or more people are present in a university vehicle.
f. Exceptions to this requirement may be in place for certain areas of campus, such as the C.H.I.L.D. Center, University Preschool, Fitness Center, WIAC/Athletics, or farms, where face covering use is not feasible or safe. In such cases, other safeguards such as barriers or physical distancing will be utilized if possible. Use of those spaces is conditioned on compliance with those other safeguards. Approved exceptions to this policy will be posted in the designated areas. University offices in need of an exception to this policy should write to administrative-policy@uwrf.edu.
g. Face coverings must be comprised of two or more layers of fabric, fit snugly and completely cover the wearer’s nose and mouth. For more details on appropriate styles and usage of face coverings, refer to the CDC guidance.

2. Physical distancing of at least six feet will be maintained when feasible in all classrooms, and where possible in labs, specialized learning environments, public spaces and in workspaces.

3. Utilize frequent handwashing with soap and water, or the use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol when soap and water are not readily available.

4. Engage in daily self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19, and if symptoms exist, follow the direction provided by university or public health officials.

5. Cooperate and comply with university and public health officials regarding contact tracing, quarantine, and isolation processes or directives. Please be aware that the university will use seating chart and attendance tracking in face-to-face courses, as well as any other data available including meal plan, door access, event registration, visitor logs, and WiFi analytics to aid in the tracing efforts.

6. While the University has adopted sanitation protocols to reduce the spread of the virus, individual units are expected to be responsible for their office spaces and to appropriately sanitize items and surfaces on a regular basis.

In accordance with its mission and values, as well as Board of Regents guidance, UW-River Falls will prioritize the health and safety of students, faculty, staff and surrounding communities when making decisions regarding the return to campus in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Safety measures taken by the University, including those noted above, are intended to help reduce the spread of this illness. Despite these efforts, however, the University cannot guarantee that individuals will not be exposed to or develop this illness. Therefore, individuals should rely on their own judgment (as well as the advice of their health care provider) to determine whether it safe for them to return to campus.

Reasonable Accommodation

Reasonable accommodations will be made for individuals unable to wear a face covering. Requests for reasonable accommodations are considered on a case-by-case basis. It is the responsibility of the individual requesting the accommodation to contact the appropriate office below to obtain an approved reasonable accommodation.

- Employees requesting a reasonable accommodation, should contact Human Resources and complete the Reasonable Accommodation request form located here.
• Students requesting a reasonable accommodation due to disability, should contact Ability Services and may find more information here.
• Students requesting a reasonable accommodation for a reason other than a disability, should contact the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Excellence & Student Success.

Students with an approved reasonable accommodation will receive an approved accommodation form from the Ability Services Office and must present that upon request to a university official or instructor.

A student or employee who has been granted a reasonable accommodation by the university is not required to explain to others the underlying basis for the accommodation.

Compliance
The health of our community is everyone’s responsibility. Wearing a mask is one of the most important ways to keep our campus community safe and healthy.

UW-River Falls expects all members of the university community to behave responsibly with respect for the health and safety of others. There may be times where following these expectations, such as wearing a face covering, is uncomfortable or inconvenient. Nonetheless, compliance with this policy is critical for the safe return to campus, residence halls, and in-class instruction. Additionally, the safety of the university community is dependent on the cooperation with quarantine and isolation directives. As a result, the university expects all students and employees to cooperate and comply with university and public health officials regarding contact tracing, quarantine, and isolation processes or directives.

Individuals who do not adhere to this policy directive may be asked or directed to leave campus. Students and employees who choose not to comply with this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

Reporting a concern
Reports about concerns may be made electronically via the UW-River Falls “Report It” website, using the reporting form for general student concerns or employee concerns.

• Employees are expected to inform university officials about a specific concern about noncompliance by completing and submitting a report. Additionally, an employee with a concern about noncompliance or general questions about this policy may contact their immediate supervisor, department chair/dean, division head, or human resources.
• A student with a concern about noncompliance or general questions about this policy may complete and submit a report via the Report It website or may directly contact Residence Life (for matters related to the Residence Halls), the Dean of applicable college (for concerns in classrooms), or the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Excellence & Student Success.

For more information regarding this policy, please see below “Related Documents.”

No Discrimination
Consistent with the university’s policies against discrimination, UW-River Falls does not tolerate discrimination, profiling, bias, or any form of harassment, based on race, disability, or other protected class, in conjunction with this policy or any other COVID-related policies. Any reported incidents will be addressed in accordance with university policy.
Severability

If any provision of this policy or its application to any person or circumstance is held to be invalid, then the remainder of the policy, including the application of such part or provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected and shall continue in full force and effect. To this end, the provisions of this policy are severable.

Authority

The UW-River Falls Chancellor approves this policy in accordance with the Administrative Policy process. The Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance is responsible for the substance of, and compliance with all administrative policies. The Policy Owner (Responsible Office) is responsible for the administration and maintenance of this policy. Request an exception to this policy by writing to administrative-policy@uwrf.edu.

Sanctions and Appeals Process

Failure to adhere to the provisions of this policy may result in appropriate disciplinary action as provided under existing procedures applicable to students, faculty, and staff, and/or civil or criminal prosecution.

University Responsibilities

Human Resources owns and manages policies that fall under its area of responsibility. Human Resources oversees the development and review of the policy.

Related Documents

- Board of Regents Resolution 11, approved July 9, 2020
- UW-River Falls Website, Falcons Forward, https://www.uwrf.edu/Falcons-Forward/Index.cfm

Contact

Please direct questions about this policy to administrative-policy@uwrf.edu.